This Is Pretend

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This Is Pretend

by AsilandWriting

Summary

“You’re bleeding out!” was her astute assessment, Jax’s ears starting to ring,“I’m pretty sure you lost half your blood between here and the door we crashed through and I don’t know where the others are, I don’t know where Caine is and I don’t know what to do!”

She accentuated her point with a censored curse at the new wave of liquid bubbling through his abdomen.

“And you say it’s ‘Not that bad’???”

“I’m just dying, it’s fine.”

An adventure goes a bit wrong and Pomni forgets for a small second that death is not a thing in the Digital Circus.

Notes

Episode 5 presented Pomni and Jax becoming maybe friends, so I'm running with it, tumbling down stairs.

See the end of the work for more notes

Blinking himself awake, the haze of unconsciousness shifted slowly but surely to reveal the sensation of fingers digging harshly into his gut.

Not the best first impression to come back to in Jax's humble opinion.

For a moment all he could see was gray concrete ceiling, blinking at it owlishly; once, twice, three times, eyelids dragging as if pushing through molasses. When the view kept blurring, staying in perpetual moving fog, he had to make peace with the fact that it was not just the environment unnaturally shifting for drama and atmosphere, but that he was partially to blame for the walls seemingly tilting inwards. Pressing his skull back he determined what he was laying on was, indeed, more gray concrete, judging from the cold creeping into his fur and the texture pressing against his back.

Taking stock of his body, a rivulet of warmth made itself known, sloppily meandering its way from his stomach down his sides and onto the ground, where his gloves could feel the substance start to go tacky.

Rubbing thumb and pointer, it could not have been too long since he passed out, the blood his gloves were soaking in still slick enough to slide around. The shock of being shanked from behind and thrown onto the floor was still tingling in his bones as well so that was a pretty telling sign.

The fact that he had one panicking jester on top of him also helped to narrow down the timeline.

Pomni's hands were splayed out over his middle section as if she could push all the blood that had leaked through his overalls back, curling her hands into fists whenever the spaces in between her fingers started bubbling up unnaturally with fresh waves. Her head was hovering above his torso, teeth gritted and pressing her entire body weight down so hard her outstretched arms shook.

Red coated her forearms up to her elbows and Jax disliked the fact that his very first conscious thought was to hope she would be able to get the ugly stains out of her pearl white plastic skin later when this was all over.

Only to remember a beat later that Caine would clean them up.

But here he was anyway.

His ears twitched.

Small bursts of curses slipped through Pomni's lips, as were multiple no's, higher and higher and Jax wished his avatar had been aligned with any other animal breed. He was pretty much certain she has blown out at least one of his ear drums at this point. He was semi aware of her shaking in place, the point of contact getting number by the second and spreading. The trembly voice however jutted out sharp in contrast, his ears flicking away from her whenever another curse tumbled out and the filter popped off.

Why Caine decided blood spillage was a good idea for this adventure, but not to take the censors off their backs, he will never understand.

So, what? Kids were granted to watch someones intestines hit the floor, but a good old fashioned fμ@7 was not allowed?

Cruel, truly.

What was also cruel was being pressed down since it was starting to get to his spine. He was sure Pomni had all the best intentions, the bleeding heart that she was, but she could not have taken a second to find something for him to lay down on? Sure, the rooms had all been pretty empty, but one pillow or blanket had to be around somewhere.

His neck felt stiff and his legs buzzed, so that sucked.

And somehow Pomni was still at it, more synthetic blood spilling and painting the floor dark red.

The fact that she glossed over the nastiness, ignoring all the viscous fluid making its way onto her clothes and pooling around her knees, was almost admirable. Usually as soon as blood was involved people got squeamish, grossed out by it, no matter how poorly disguised the corn syrup was in the end, the try to make this in any way faithful to real life a complete joke to boot.

Trying this hard to make due with the less than adequate props was preferable than having her lay down and abstract out of boredom he guessed.

Still, she was maybe getting a little too into it.

If she really was trying to make this faucet of a body stop spilling, she had to quit pressing down on it like a ketchup tube.

“Hey-”

His voice was completely shot, worse than he thought.

He might have screamed a bit too harshly at her to move earlier.

Being chased down in adventures was common, but with her so new and her very real terror of being sliced like a breakfast sandwich, he had to snap at her to break her out of her trance. From sitting sagged like a sack of potatoes he had hauled her to her feet and pushed her forward, trying to direct her blind panic into motivation to move.

The scream he let out after being impaled probably did little to help.

Wincing, he cleared his throat with the most pathetic, wheezy cough he ever heard himself make, the sound too quiet to push through the wall of frantic mumbles.

The second “Hey.” had the same effect, his frown forming into a grimace.

With a deep inhale, that was as shallow as a puddle, he shoved his left arm underneath his body to push himself up, his right glove grabbing onto the jesters closest wrist.

Her flinch was so hard, it ripped her hand out of his own immediately, the movement tilting him forward with a jerk. The whiplash came a second after and he felt his spine hit the concrete again, the air that pushed out his lungs sounding like a very dignified yelp, very not squeaky, the perfect amount of unbothered and classy.

Her 5 foot frame slamming back into him, hands digging into his wound made his second squawk just as sophisticated, the gurgle in there surely just a figment of his imagination.

He rather focused on the dilated pupils above him and how they darted so harshly back and forth they looked more like they were vibrating in place.

Face somehow even paler than usual, Pomni's voice came out shrill.

"Don't move! Are you stupid?!"

Okay, ow?

He had only tried to get her attention and stop her hyperventilating, that is what he got for caring.

"For sure, should have let you get stabbed instead. My bad."

The tone was meant to be sarcastic, a joke, but as he let his body relax and his head roll to the side, closing his eyes to will himself to breathe through the nausea, it came out half baked, as an accusation. He could feel her fingers curl in further, the blood squeezing out with a creaky screech through the plastic of her hands. The action sounded almost like a dying squeaky toy and he focused on that instead of the gasps Pomni was letting out, continuing to try to breathe and clearly failing miserably at it.

Then her pupils turned into pencil scribbles.

"Calm down," he hissed through his teeth, "It's not that bad."

"Not that bad?!"

Okay, again! Ow!

Could she press down any harder?

What was she made of? Lead??

Struggling to get his body lifted underneath her grip, furious at himself for the installed animalistic instinct to start kicking his one leg at rapid speed, he tried to move his arms to crawl away, only for Pomni to shout at his face.

"You're bleeding out!" was her astute assessment, Jax's ears starting to ring,"I'm pretty sure you lost half your blood between here and the door we crashed through and I don't know

where the others are, I don't know where Caine is and I don't know what to do!"

She accentuated her point with a censored curse at the new wave of liquid bubbling through his abdomen.

"And you say it's *'Not that bad'*???"

"I'm just dying, it's fine."

That shut her up real quick.

Too quick, as if his words had slapped her across the face.

He was not about to apologize for pointing out the obvious, a scowl stretching across his face as he closed his eyes once more. He hated loosing, especially on an adventure that was as easy as walking through a few decrepit corridors, gathering some items and not getting caught by whatever started to hunt them as soon as they entered. It should have been easy, he should have used the jester as bait if that is what he got for playing nice on a duo adventure, let her get mauled by whatever creature had decided to bring a knife to a fist fight.

At least the silence did not last; it was almost comical how soft her voice got after all that racket she instigated.

"Don't give up."

He refused to move, the fact that he was listening only visible by his ear tip twitching in irritation.

"We can fix it, you just got to hold on, okay?"

His thoughts snarled, Jax ready to give her a piece of his mind, her empowering speech crawling under his skin and scratching at all the wrong places. Admirable truly that she was focusing on winning this challenge and trying to motivate him to get his butt off the floor to do the same. However, as irritating as it was, the hole in his body was very much an out of commission stamp and a free pass for her to go.

"I'm pretty sure slapping a bandage onto this mess will increase my chances of survival by like one percent, but go off I guess."

Next time he would make sure she broke her arm and ask her to continue on with it; let her see how motivating that would be.

Instead her voice became even softer and Jax had to strain himself to hear.

"Why are you like this?"

His heart jumped for some god forsaken reason.

What was that tone?

Tilting his heavy head, all he could make out of his bleary eyes was Pomni's slumped figure on top of him, arms still outstretched, her body still a weight across his midsection, hands still surrounded by a thick coat of blood and viscera, squelching as she shook in place.

In the half dark he had no hopes of reading her face, her chin tilted too far to be able to make out any sort of expression she was making.

If it were not for the tears starting to roll down her cheeks in shiny rivers, reflecting the dim light.

At any different point, in any other scenario, he would have found them funny; the tears were as big as golfballs, jello like in texture, plopping onto the floor like the saddest water balloons known to man. By the second bounce, the clear, fat droplets disappeared into the ground like it was a dry desert, not a single trace of them left.

But here, right now, it was not funny at all.

"Why is everything a joke to you?"

Gazes meeting, Jax blinked harshly, trying wildly to understand where this was coming from.

Pinwheel eyes pierced him with a look he could not pinpoint past "wet cat" and "kicked puppy", so completely out of his dept as he willed his sluggish nervous system to cooperate, to help understand why she would ever look at him like that.

As if her world was about to shatter.

As if he was worth something.

"You're going to die."

The words hit like a sledge hammer.

"You're going to **die**."

She sounded so sure.

"And I can't do anything about it, I can't fix it-... I..."

She sounded completely and utterly devastated.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry…"

Then her voice cracked like porcelain and the word 'grief' finally shot through his head, his jaw locking up.

Trembling harder, she kept swallowing down her tears and clenching her eyes shut, as if she could not stand to look at him any longer soaked in his own blood. Her head was so far down, she almost touched her forehead to the back of her own hands, hoping to disappear; if she could not see him, she could forget where she was and what was happening.

“Pomni-...”

He felt her bracing herself under his touch as his hand found her shoulder, her face turning away as if saying her name was the last nail being punched into his coffin. He could tell that she was waiting for his next words, ready to burn them into her memory out of a desperate need to hold onto anything at all as slippery fingers curled into his overalls.

So, with the steadiest breath he could manage, he said:

“This is pretend.”

A heart beat, then two, and Pomni finally let her shoulders fall, her eyes snapping to him impossibly wide.

“Huh?”

“This is all pretend,” Jax repeated, even steadier, the adrenalin rushing in like a tidal wave, “We’re in a simulation, remember? I won’t die. Not for real.”

When her chest hiccuped, jumpstarting her to breathe again, Jax let his head fall back onto the concrete.

“I told you that before, we can’t actually die here in the circus. Caine just sometimes likes to make our role-plays more life like, making us bleed or able to die or both.” He clicked his tongue in exchange for a hand wave, since trying to lift his appendage again resulted in his muscles refusing to cooperate. “I’ll just black out and land in the circus again after the adventure is over.”

He was greeted with silence, which was to be expected.

Embarrassment like that tended to do this.

Especially since forgetting that dying is not an option in here, no matter how much you bled and hurt and chocked, looped back to realizing that they could never really truly leave this stupid game world. They were stuck, for better and absolutely for the worse. He was sure Pomni completely forgot about all the rules of this new life in her panic and now was about to panic again because, oh yeah, insanity was always around the corner and the actual corpses were running around in the basement.

He did not blame her for that particular slip up. It just reaffirmed his behavior of not taking anything seriously being the winning strategy here; you will never have to deal with any heartache if everything was a joke to you.

Surprisingly enough, Pomni seemed to calm down at his words, her shoulders sagging and the pressure to the wound lessening cautiously. The fat droplets dried up into corner accents, resting at the far side of her eyes, the lower eyelid rimmed with liquid. The fingers were still there, held in place, but her tremors were stopping, her entire body tilting back to rest on her knees.

Then she sucked in a slow breath, before she sighed out a small:

“Are you sure?”

“I died before.”

Her gaze stayed the same, so he added an eye-roll.

“I’m pretty sure.”

Her body relaxed further at his sigh, the last drops finally falling, and she reluctantly broke eye contact, instead focusing back to her hands. Lifting one of them, she stared at it, the fake blood dripping off and onto the floor, before she tried to clean off the mess by shacking it off. Flecks of the paint landed on the wall and Jax snorted.

“Indoor decorating at its peak. Get a pin roller, at least we can get use out of this puddle.”

She did not dignify that with a response, focusing on cleaning her arms, the dried bits flaking off her skin as she methodically wiped away the excess. It was almost hypnotizing to watch her do this, her face blank, but the cogs in her brain turning hard.

“...why did you save me?”

He raised an eyebrow in response.

“You didn’t have to do that.” She kept scratching away at the blood, rubbing it into gooey pieces where it was still fresh enough to congeal and flicking them off her person. She rubbed her hands together then, the blue glove actually resembling the original color again. “If it got me, it wouldn’t have hurt me-”

“Nah, dying hurts real bad, trust me on that one,” Jax refuted, a mirthless laugh pressing between his teeth, “I bet you would be so out of it with your scribbly Deer-In-The-Headlight eyes and that is why I rather deal with that myself than have you blubbering about it. ”

“Why?”

“It was only funny the first few times.”

Jax shrugged, the corner of his mouth twitching.

“Now it’s just sad.”

After all, what good would it do to have her think she died, bring her back and have her abstract a second later. Dying was not easy, the situation had happened before, where people experienced death and the proper forewarnings were ignored. It was a stupid way to go, pathetic and preventable. And he was not going to get blamed for putting her at risk and loose the freshest member of the circus; it would be a waste of prank potential at the very least.

Taking his answer and chewing on it thoughtfully, Pomni must have found what she was looking for, nodding once, before her hands clasped each other and rested on top of her thighs.

“Thank you for protecting me.”

Simple words, but they shot Jax through the heart like a bullet.

“So, what happens now?”

“You leave me behind to dramatically die a hero’s death, win this adventure for us and it’s back to the good ol’, reliable ol’ common room at the tent.”

Hesitating, Pomni’s eyes ping-ponged between his face and the wound sluggishly oozing, mouth pressing into a thin line.

“And just… leave you behind?”

“Duh? You don’t want to drag my corpse around with you, not recommended. A lot of weight on the vertebrae.”

“Do you want me to stay?”

Jax scoffed loudly and regretted the lack of oxygen it caused immediately: “What, you think I need my paws held when the sickle man knocks at my door? Fat chance.”

Pomni did not seem swayed, still scratching with her pointing finger at the yellow cuff of her glove, more blood leaving in chunks. His first concern of her staining her plastic limbs was unwarranted, the cloth and skin underneath perfectly fine.

Or at least, he believed so.

Things were getting blurrier by the minute so maybe it was wishful thinking.

He almost missed Pomni speaking up once more, her shoulders hunching up to her non-existent ears.

“You said it hurts. And…” Taking a deep breath, she swallowed harshly. “I don’t want to abandon you.”

That was one loaded admission and Jax thought back to their first meeting.

He was pretty sure she was mainly focused on the fact that she had left Ragatha in the dust when escaping Kaufmo, but, granted, she was like a few hours old in Digital Circus time. Being confronted with a black mass and multiple eyes glowing in acid neon colors was not the best first impression to have and legs tended to work faster than heads.

Jax meanwhile had left the two of them to fend for themselves without a single ounce of remorse, knowing exactly what would happen if they got caught.

He struggled to understand why Pomni would think twice about leaving now.

She could regret leaving Ragatha all she wanted, but with him she would just make it even.

But here she sat, waiting for him to take the olive branch, completely and utterly honest in leaving the decision to him. To stay with him until the program ran its course and he was chucked into darkness for hours on end that lasted between seconds and eternity.

It was tempting.

“Nah.”

The smile on his face was strained, but he would be damned if he let himself look this pathetic.

“Won’t even matter in a few minutes.”

He does not know for the life of him why he added his next words.

“You can promise me if I ever do end up six feet under to throw some dirt onto my grave.”

Not like anyone else respected him enough to entertain the thought and do it willingly. Pomni was just new enough to make a request to and have her pull through with it, just to leave the others irritated enough to comment. He made sure no one would mourn him just by being himself.

Plus! Most importantly! There was never going to be a grave anyway. With death equivalent to turning into a massive ink stain and cellar time there would be nobody to decide to not throw dirt.

They could still refuse to come to the funeral, but that was neither here nor there.

He forgot where he was going with this.

There was a moment of eye contact that was indecipherable to Jax, something between disappointment and fond exasperation dancing in her eyes, softening the expression.

“I’ll add a flower.”

“Oh, a little snack? How thoughtful.”

Pomni did not miss a beat.

“I’ll throw in a carrot, too.”

“Dessert?? I’m flattered.”

He had enough energy to nudge his head to face the other wall, Pomni now only visible in the corner of his eye. He was going for a dramatic, haughty up-turn of his imaginary nose, but the movement resembled trying to get comfortable more. It also left him a bit wheezy, his chest rising a bit desperately to keep his body going. If the adventure were any kind of realistic, he would have bled out the second he had stepped away from the door, but the game decided now was the time it was all catching up to him.

Pomni noticed the shift, of course she did, and she placed one hand over his own in a show of comfort. She was not squeezing it, just placed it carefully on top of his own, and Jax found that the pain turned way more bearable by this. In a lapse of judgement he tried to reciprocate, absentmindedly trying to give back what he was given, before his own body saved him the humiliation.

All his fingers did was twitch in place and he opted to focus on the simulated warmth that spread there instead.

“I’m sorry for making you die in my place.”

“I’ll shove you personally into the next death trap if you want.”

That made her actually snort out a little laugh and his chest fluttered uncomfortably, the sensation making him cough. Her hand left his, Jax mourning it for a few heartbeats, only to have her hover them helplessly over his shoulders as he bit down the itch in his throat. Instead of iron, there was the taste of paint thinner on his tongue and he groaned, hitting his head back to focus on the pain.

When both of them settled, he blinked at the empty wall.

“So, what are you waiting for? Do I have to give a personal, raw speech to inspire you to continue on your journey?”

Pomni pressed the knuckles of her right hand to her mouth to bite down on one, her unsure response slipping through her lips.

“A small one, maybe?”

“If you don’t win this blasted adventure, I’ll throw you into the lake.”

Her hands fell to her lap, eyes half-lidded and unimpressed.

“I’ll bite your ankles first.”

“You will be low enough to the floor for that for sure when I drag you across the Grounds.”

“You won’t, I’ll have you know that I got us a win.”

Jax smirked.

“That’s the spirit.”

The conversation lulled to a stop and Pomni awkwardly started to pull herself up. Trying to avoid touching the puddle she was kneeling in, she shifted to the side, looking for a dry spot to push off from. When she righted herself, she took a few squelching foot steps away from him, not daring to touch her knees and undo all the hard work she had done to clean her gloves.

Stepping from one foot to the other and her arms glued to the side of her body, only to have her hands flap up and down, fingers curled tightly, she took another hesitant step back.

"… see you later?"

Timid, hopeful, her gaze tilted into helpless the longer he took to reply, gathering his strength to move his hands and show a double thumbs-up.

"For sure."

Somewhat reassured, Pomni finally turned with a tight nod, making her way to the next door slowly. She looked back when she made contact with the door knob and Jax waved his hands he had used to thumbs up with in the first place. If that is what it took for her to move, he would grit his teeth and bare the pain, just for the peace that would follow.

He swore he could see new tears dance in her eyes, sliding down her cheeks.

What for, he chose to ignore.

Then she squeezed through the exit and it clicked behind her with finality, Jax letting the breath go he had held in.

That was unnecessary.

If there ever was a next newbie, he would instruct Ragatha to add the "Death Is Not Permanent" clause to her introductory speech, really drill that piece of information into the brain of whatever sucker tumbled into this hell hole next. Pomni should have let his unconscious body behind the second she realized he would not be able to get back up.

What a waste of time on her part, honestly.

Now, alone with his thoughts, he had to admit that the wound hurt way, way worse than he had made it out to be. Saving brave face in front of her was more important however, he tolerated no less than going out with grace. Even if the dark was starting to overwhelm him and his lungs started to stutter, at least he made sure that he showed no weakness; it would not have helped any if Pomni lost her mind watching his avatar vanish or, god forbid, the light leave his eyes.

Trauma was a constant, but there was a threshold.

Watching someone bleed out was enough for a first time. There did not need to be multiple first times in a row. Watching a person die and having to deal with the guilt in the span of a couple of minutes was not what a fun adventure was.

He knew better, why was he getting so upset by this?

Pomni was good to go, only slight blood specific nightmares coming for her, nothing else.

Death will take him out and with absolutely no consequence, he was used to it.

Done and done.

It would always be scary.

Dying was natural, coming back from it was not, and it screwed with his head a little bit more every time. It had happened a handful of times by now, he avoided it like the plague, it was never restful and always painful. Facing death alone was the absolute worst thing he ever had to deal with.

At least this time someone wanted to stay, to keep him company.

She had genuinely feared what would happen to him, as harmless as the situation was in the end; she had not known, actually forgotten, and the worry, the care, was sincere.

For a moment, a snapshot, something in this pixelated dreamscape was actually...

Real.

That feeling alone was smoothing down the jagged edges tumbling inside his chest as he breathed through his mouth.

Closing his eyes, he exhaled and-

-stumbled in place as he hit the floor with unsteady feet.

His sight was still dark around the edges and fuzzy in the middle, as his hands immediately wandered to his forehead. Balancing himself out, he stood hunched, pressing with the palm of his gloves above his right eye, trying to push the headache back into the recesses of his skull.

When the pounding subsided and he lifted his head, he was met with the rest of the circus crew, looking at him with expressions ranging between surprise and relief, almost making him gag where he stood.

Spotting Pomni, she looked like she had been caught in the middle of crying her eyes out, the gloopy tears back on her face full force, eyes too wide and wet, her entire frame shacking.

Mouth open like a gaping fish, swaying in place, she stood there as if she could not comprehend that he was back.

Stretching himself, fingers interlocking so he could push them forward and crack his back, he let out an exaggerated yawn, before using a full body shudder to get rid of the last buzzy remains of his simulated death.

“Told you I’d be fine ~.”

He was going for snarky, to make fun of her, but instead of the annoyance or the embarrassed stuttering he was expecting, for the other shoe to drop, she just completely sagged in relief. A sob tore out of her mouth and Jax will deny having jumped at that for the rest of his life.

Just like he was going to deny taking panicked steps back when she crashed into his chest like a bowling ball.

By some miracle he kept standing, arms hovering, stiff as a board as he stared down at her.

Once again, he was completely flabbergasted at the reaction.

There was no reason for her to sob this hard; he was fine, he told her he would be back and it could not have been longer than a couple hours max. And still she clung to him, face hidden in his now clean, fixed overalls, hands gripping the fur on his back, his one strap caught in her grasp and tugging at his shoulder forcefully.

His head lifted and he silently waved his hands around, begging for anybody to start explaining what was going on.

Ragatha was the first to take mercy on him, no surprise, her smile forcibly cheerful.

“There we go! Right on schedule, too!” she clapped her hands together to sell the illusion of happy news, “Pomni was just wondering when you would be back. Caine kind of… lost track of you in the void...”

That sounded pretty on track for the ringmaster, to forget to activate the fail safe for their fake death and open the little spare room between the circus over world, the adventure map and the void. A little chamber of limbo in between limbo to stay in before he summoned all of them back to the circus.

Classic mistake, who would have thought anyone could die on this adventure, only a slight wave of the hand mistake, absolutely.

No wonder he felt like his head was killing him.

Now he was pretty glad he took the hit, the jester would have freaked for sure.

“Pomni told us how you got chopped down. Pretty graphic stuff, really not her kinda scene,” Zooble helpfully added, the girl gripping him tighter somehow, “She pretty much just started counting off worst case scenarios after, that’s all.”

Very reassuring, he was being held as if he was going to drizzle down her hands like kinetic sand if she did not squeeze him together. Her hiccuping shook his whole body, his arms still unsure where to land, deciding that the top of her hat was his safest bet. At this point the entire group just stood there, listening to her snivel her heart out, Jax turning his head carefully back and forth to try looking for an escape.

Multiple pairs of eyes drilled into him, all of them probably imagining him in the oh so gruesome way he perished and it made his neck fur bristle. It was all too saccharine and

wholesome, that they took interest in him biting the bullet, and one sweeping glance told him that there was no dignified way he could stop this hug without making a huge deal out of it.

He was too tired for a screaming match right now, he wanted to go sleep this cursed day off.

So, bracing himself as if called forward to put a gun to the roof of his mouth and shoot his brains out, his paws clasped Pomni's shoulders to move her off him.

Before she could even try to whine about the loss of contact, for the others to step in, he squatted down, his shoulders stiff and ears pinned back as he guided her back into his arms. It took momentous effort to not leave the embrace a second after as if he had been burnt, to pretend as if the moment was not being publicly made to show how pathetic he had to be to comply to a few whines and salty water.

But then her arms circled around his neck and her face shoved itself into his shoulder, both of their breaths hitching.

"I'm glad you're okay."

He paused.

It still did not sound fake out of her mouth.

Maybe it was really not all pretend with her.

Pressing his forehead to the side of her head, strips of hair obscured his view.

And maybe this hug was not the worst thing in the entire digital plane.

"So…" he drawled after what felt like far too long and entirely too short, trying to push down the lump in his throat, "Did you win?"

"I did."

"Darn. And here I was looking forward to drowning you. What did I even come back for?"

Instead of a response, Pomni pressed her fingertips into his shoulders, before deciding to curl her hands into fists and grabbing the purple fur once more, holding onto it as if it was her only life line, strands poking out of the free spaces of her gloves.

Jax took a glimpse at her arms and he was relieved when her white plastic skin was the exact same as before the adventure, no ugly stains to remember this adventure by.

Only to rethink a beat later that he would not even mind if they did.

Here he was anyway.

End Notes

Canon will probably break my neck as soon as episode 6 comes around, but anyway, we sprinting.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!